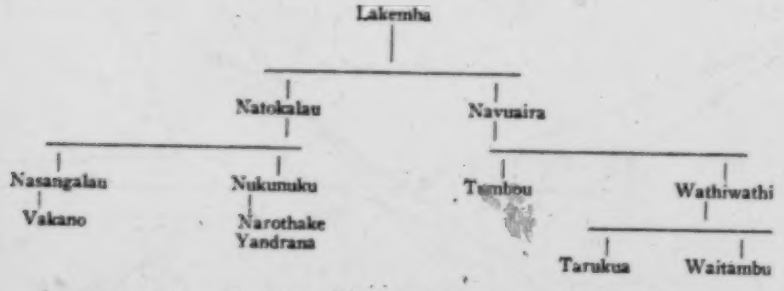
1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

For "the purpose of feasts," Lakemba is divided into two districts: Natokalau, the North; Navuaira, the Southwest or West. The divisions are again divided as follows:



Levuka is not mentioned in these divisions, because its inhabitants stand apart, "They are foreigners," considered as people of Mbau.

Houses of Lakemba are all of Tongan style—oblong in plan with rounded ends, the roofs slightly convex. The houses stand on mounds (*yavu*) of the same shape, the height varying, only a few present day mounds being of any considerable height, notably one which has a double plinth. These mounds, or plinths, play a large part in Fijian tradition.

As a result of a Government regulation, almost every house has attached to it and built on the level ground a little hut which serves as a kitchen and family dining room. With few exceptions, all the houses present their flanks to the beach. In Tumbou, a door is built at the west end, and along the north coast some houses, I believe, if not all, have their doors in this position. In Wathiwathi, where the beach runs southwest to northeast, the door is at the southwest end, invariably to one side to avoid a post in the middle of the house. Inferiors enter at this door; superiors, by a door which is usually in the side facing the sea. Some houses have a door on each side.

It is in the *sue*, or lower end of the house, where the cold food is kept, kava is made, and inferiors sit. Usually the most important person sits toward the upper end with his back to the householder's couch, which is erected in the *longgi* (the upper end). This end in some houses is cut off by a curtain of bark cloth or a wooden partition.

The floor is of sand and pebbles strewn with coconut leaves and covered with mats (*tambakau*) about 8 feet by 2 feet, made of half coconut leaves plaited and stitched together. Over these again are laid the ordinary mats or *yamba* of *Pandanus* leaves. At the lower end of the house these mats are coarse with very broad strips, but where the more important people sit, the mats are usually finer. An honored guest is provided with a clean

1: Hocart Y-5 (ca. 1920) 1929 OQ6 Lau OQ6
Lakemba

mat. These mats and the bark cloth are stored in bales on the beams wrapped in old, coarse matting.

In some *longgi*, the couch on which the head of the household sleeps is simply a pile of mats; in others it is a long, broad stage spread with mats. The other members of the household sleep about the floor with their feet to the wall. In the old days, beds were piled up with grass and coconut leaves, five or six feet high all round the house, each wife having her bed.

Near the couches members of the household place their European wooden boxes in which they keep their clothing, scented oil, comb, mirror, and other odds and ends. At the lower end and at the sides of the house, hanging from the beams, resting on a beam, or placed against the wall, are kava bowls, kava cups, enamel cups, hurricane lanterns, and baskets.

Dwelling houses of married folks are called *vale soso*. The sleeping quarters of the young men are small ordinary houses called *mbure*.

Tumbou

The present site of Tumbou was first occupied by the Tongans. The people of this village moved down to the shore in 1868 or 1869 under the reign of Taliai Tupou. The remains of the old village Nakorovusa lies about half a mile higher up the Nakula stream. Only the moat and a few mounds on which the houses stood are left, all covered with a thick jungle.

As shown in the plan of Tumbou, given in figure 3, each house has a name, and it is customary to say, not "I am going to Isoa's," but "I am going to Vunisavisavi"; not "Salesi and his people," but "they of Matanalailai."

Some of these names are old, some are recent. Thus Wangganui was so called because the high chief's sister's son had been to school in Wanganui, New Zealand. The name Niu Kini was suggested by the fact that a teacher was in New Guinea. Manono is an old name; it refers to an island in Samoa, the place of origin of the Lemaki family. Tui Mereke's house is called Loa, after a village in Oneata; his mother was a lady of Oneata. Many house names are derived from Vanua Levu, more particularly Thakaundrove as: Thakaundroveiwai, Mbenau, Seanggangga.

Formerly a ditch or stream divided the village of Tumbou into halves or sides (*tambana*); Tumbou to the east, and Tai, the other bank, to the west. The village is also divided into clans known as *matanggali* (*mata*, face, eye, also group; *nggali*, subject to, or connected).

The subdivisions of a clan are called *mbati ni lovo* (sides or edges of the oven). "Sides of the oven," says my informant Meli, "refer to feasts; each edge has its own oven, but when the food is ready, the whole is put

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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373 ing it with *mbu* juice to the bottom of the coconut shell, or by inserting it into a coconut leaflet knotted in the form of a cross (called *lakamba*) at the bottom of the coconut shell. A small amount of boiled coconut oil, called *molia*, is poured into the shell and the wick is lighted. Sometimes the wick is inserted into the flesh of a half coconut or papaya and used in the same way. Boiled coconut oil used for lighting is made by grating ripe coconuts, straining the gratings after they have stood four nights, and boiling the oil. The natives say that oil lamps were not known before the Tongans came to Lau. According to Moto of Undu, little light was used at night in the olden days because the natives feared enemy raids.

Torches are made by splitting the upper ends of five or six coconut spathes (*mbarawa*) tied into a bundle or held together by hand. The split ends are lighted. Six or seven *ngasau* reeds bound together are sometimes used as a torch.

●352 The floor space of the house, with the exception of the space under the couch (*vata*) and the hearth, is covered with coconut-leaf mats (*tambakau*), laid over coconut leaves or beach sand (*langere*) according to a definite pattern. The floor under the couch is covered with pebbles. In a house with four supporting posts the mats are arranged as follows: one central row of mats, placed end to end, extends down the middle of the floor from the main entrance to the *longgi*. On each side of the central row is another row of mats, placed side by side. One row of mats placed end to end, extends around the interior of the house (excluding the *longgi*) behind the supporting posts next to the wall.

Floor mats of pandanus are placed over the coconut-leaf mats. Properly, according to the natives, one large mat, called *i thoni* (*tevutevu* in the Mbauan dialect), should cover the central section and extend into the lower part of the house and one small mat, called *kotokoto*, should lie across the upper end of the house. The *i kotokoto* mat is used by the owner and people of high rank. This arrangement is, however, seldom seen today. Three floor mats usually cover the floor: a coarse mat at the lower end, a finer mat in the middle, and a fine mat at the upper end of the house. Every house contains a few large smooth stones or blocks of wood used as weights to hold the mats down when the wind blows.

A large, high couch, called *vata*, composed of a wooden frame covered with mats, occupies the uppermost end of many houses. The couch is from 70 cm. to 1.5 meters high. Its length is determined by the width of the house between the main supporting posts, and its width is about 1 meter less than the depth of the upper part of the house (*longgi*). In a few houses owned by [554] ranking men, the couch is screened from the rest of the house by a large piece of the highly valued Fijian tapa, hung from the tie beam with sennit. The natives say that formerly there was no couch and that the floor of the upper

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part of the house was covered with mats and separated from the rest of the house by a log or by a curtain of Fijian tapa. The couch is rarely used to sleep on. The owner and his wife usually sleep on a pile of sleeping mats (*yambe ni mothe*) just in front of the couch. Other members of the household often sleep on the floor mats in two parallel rows down the central section, their heads toward the center of the house, their feet toward the side walls. Tongan tapa is used as bed covering when needed. Mosquito curtains of tapa are not used in southern Lau.

Wooden headrests (*kali*) are used in Lau, especially by the older men. Intimately associated with the head, which is the center of mana, the headrest is tabu private property. It may not be touched by persons of lower rank than the owner. Headrests are kept in the upper part of the house.

Clan property is stored in the house of the clan headman. Mats and bark-cloth, representing the main wealth of the clan, are wrapped in old mats and tied into bundles (*solesole*) with native rope or sennit. A long, wooden rod is placed over the lower tie beams and the bundles are stored across this rod and the median plate. As many as four bundles in one house are rarely seen and many houses have no bundles at all. Natives say that formerly more wealth was accumulated than today. Rolls of sennit are placed behind the couch or hung in the lower part of the house. If the clan owns a kava bowl it is hung by the sennit hanger with the strainer, in the lower part of the house. Unused kava and food bowls are stored under the couch. They are concealed by the mat covering which hangs down to the floor in front. As far as I could determine there are few whales' teeth in southern Lau. If a clan possesses one of these valuable objects it is hidden away and not hung on the supporting posts in the upper part of the house as in Tumbou, Lakemba. The floor is swept with a broom (*i tavitaviraki*) of midribs of coconut leaflets, made by women. The midrib of a coconut leaflet is cut with a knife from the base to the end of the leaflet. After a pile has been collected each midrib is carefully trimmed. A hand broom is made by binding the midribs with sennit to a short broomstick, row upon row. A roof broom for cleaning the rafters is made by attaching the midribs to a long broomstick.

Vale lolova kathukathu

In small sleeping houses of the type called *vale lolova kathukathu* (pl. 4, *C*), the curved wall plate (*i lolo*) is not made of joined sections as in the Tongan house type, but is made of a rod or several rods bent into place. Informants say that most of the dwelling houses in the old village of Tokalau were of this type. The house is smaller and not so strong as the *vale vaka Tonga*, but it has an oval ground plan. It differs from the *vala vaka Tonga* mainly as follows: First, the two end king posts are embedded in the ground instead of resting on the median plate and the tie beams (which are not so strong

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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this type of bowl has four knob handles which project outward at the corners of the rim. It is used as a wash bowl, especially for babies.

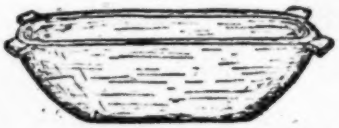

FIGURE 13.—Wooden tub, *i vakatoka* type, 96 cm. long, 73 cm. wide, 26 cm. deep, walls 1-2 cm. thick.

The *i sovasova* is a fish board of elliptical or rectangular form, used as a platter upon which to carve large fish. It is cut from a solid section of the root of the *mbau* or from *makota* or greenheart. Fish boards are usually fairly flat with a slight rim at least 1 cm. high.

HEADRESTS

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Headrests (*kali*) of several types are made in Lau, especially in Muanaithake village on Fulanga. Generally only the highest ranking member of each household owns a headrest.

Informants say that the *kali thinggi* (fig. 14, *b*) is an old type of headrest. It is made of *mbau* or occasionally of greenheart, in three pieces—two legs

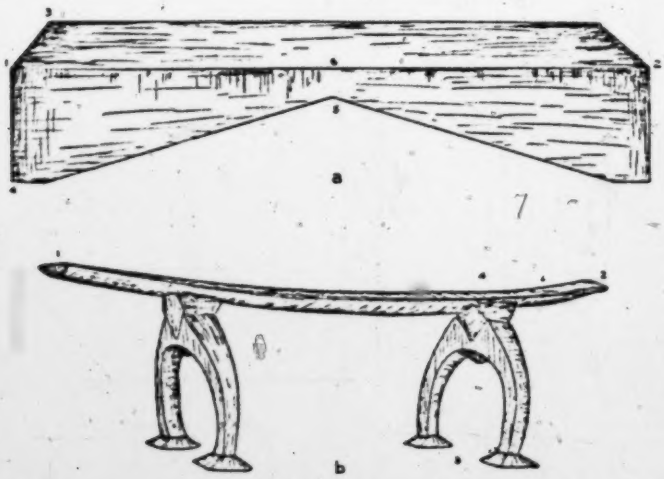

FIGURE 14.—Headrests: a, *tchiki* type, 1-2, 43 cm.; 1-3, 8 cm.; 1-4, 8 cm.; 5-6, 2 cm. b, *kali thinggi* type (B5234) made of greenheart, 1-2, 44 cm.; 3-4, 13 cm.

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and a head piece—fitted together and tied with sennit. Usually this type of headrest is carefully made and highly polished. The natives say that formerly headrests of similar shape were made in one piece and called *sauthoko*.

The *hahapo* is a Tongan type of headrest (*fafapo* in Tonga) made of a single piece of *mbau* wood (fig. 15 *a, b*). It is distinguished by its fine long curves and delicate structure.

Roughly finished blocks of wood (*tchiki* or *tekiteki*) are frequently used as headrests (fig. 14, *a*).

A section of bamboo, about 35 cm. long, with two legs of greenheart attached by means of sennit, is called *kali nduvu*. This type of headrest is imported from Viti Levu, inasmuch as large bamboo does not grow in southern Lau.

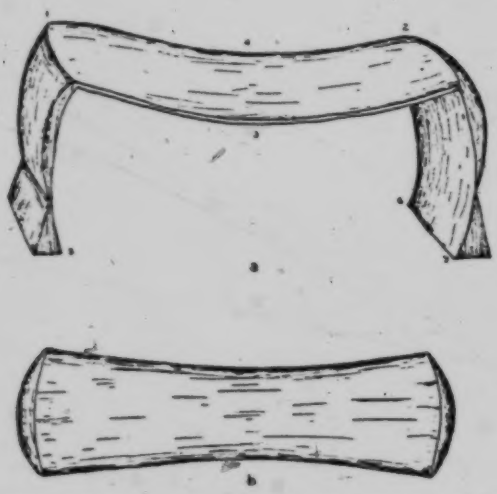

FIGURE 15.—Headrest, *hahapo* type. **a**, side view, 1-2, 30 cm.; 1-3, 9.5 cm.; 3-5, 12.5 cm.; 6-7, 10.5 cm.; 3-4, 7 cm. **b**, view from above.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

An important and very specialized craft in southern Lau is the making of large wooden slit-gongs (*lali*). They are made of a boat-shaped section of greenheart, hollowed out and with an open slot on one side. They are struck on the outside with a pair of wooden beaters. Slit-gongs are made and played in pairs, one large and one small. Two or more pairs are placed at intervals in the village. They are played by youths or men to mark village activities. Each ceremony—such as a funeral procession, the lifting of the

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The process of making mats from pandanus leaves proceeds as follows: 285

The leaves are cut from the pandanus trees in the dry season. The spines are removed from the midrib of each leaf and the spiny edges of the leaves are cut off by means of a *kuku* shell. The leaves are spread on the ground in the sun (a process called *singa ni kie*) during the day and taken in at night until they lose their greenness (about one week). Each leaf is cleaned and flattened with a *walui* shell. Holding one end of the leaf in the left hand the mat maker scrapes the leaf away from the body with a shell held in the right hand. Twenty or more leaves are rolled into a large coil (*vakaveveu*) and tied with a piece of pandanus. The coils are rolled in a mat and stored until needed.

Before plaiting the dried leaves are flattened out with a *walui* shell. Then the mat maker, relying on her eye, splits the leaves with a *kuku* shell into the required widths for wefts. She begins splitting at about 30 cm. from the base of the leaf and works toward the pointed end, away from her body. Then she turns the leaf and, with the pointed end toward her body, splits about 20 cm. toward the base end, so that about 10 cm. are left unsplit.

The plaiting (*toli*) is commenced by crossing two butt strips. Plaiting techniques are simple. The basic technique is the diagonal check weave of single wefts which vary from 3 mm. to 4 cm. in width. One, two, and three twill weaves are used for ornamentation. The wefts in the border are usually narrower than those in the main body of the mat.

To make very fine, white mats the pandanus is prepared by a slightly different process. The green leaves, after having been stripped of their spines, are rolled into coils, tied, and boiled in fresh water for about half an hour. After the coils are untied and unrolled and the leaves are straightened by pulling, the leaves are dried in the sun for several days. The following types of pandanus mats are made in southern Lau:

Floor mats. *I tholo* is a large coarse floor mat used in the lower part of the house. *I thoni ni vale* is a fine floor mat used in the upper part of the house. *I tevutevu* is a floor mat with a wool border. Fine floor and sleeping mats are preferably fringed with imported yarn in bright colors. The value of mats is measured to a large extent by the number of rows of wool in the border. A mat completely bordered with wool is called *mbatchi wa vivi*. A mat with a wool border only on one side is called *mbatchi ndua*. 285 352

Sleeping mats (yambe ni mothe). *I kendre levu* or *i tonggitonggi* is a mat about 2 meters wide and 3 meters long made of rather narrow wefts. It is sometimes decorated with a border of wool and occasionally with black geometric designs. Sleeping mats are placed on the floor at night and rolled up in the morning. *Mbatchi mbara* is a large mat used to cover the couch (*vata*). The edge of the mat facing the lower part of the house is ornamented with several rows of wool. *I kendre lailai* is a mat used for infants (*yambe ni ngone*). It is soft and consists of fine wefts about 45 by 60 cm. *Tambu kai si* (forbidden to low ranking commoners) is made only on the island of Ono. The wefts are very narrow and of triple thickness. It is a rare, valuable mat. The only mat of the *tambu kai si* type I saw was in the house of the chief of Nggalinggali on Kambara. The mat was 2.7 meters long and 1.8 meters wide, [554]

2: Thompson E-5 (1933-1934)1940 OQ6 Lau OQ6
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285 with wefts 3 mm. wide. It had a border of black geometric designs and a
352 wool fringe.

A kava mat (*yambe ni yanggona*) is slightly larger and coarser than a baby mat. It is unornamented.

An eating mat is long and narrow with coarse weave. One used in the high chief's household in Lakemba was about 28 meters long and 3 meters wide, with wefts 2 cm. wide. The edges were fringed with pandanus.

285 *Yambe volavola* are pandanus mats decorated with black geometric designs
531 in twill or check weave made with wefts dyed black. The designs are placed across the entire surface of the mat in lengthwise or diagonal bands or lines, at the corners of the mat in triangles, or around the edge of the mat as a border (fig. 18). The designs are named. A zigzag line is called *wangga ni vasua* because it resembles the *vasua*, a shellfish. A border composed of short
[386] parallel diagonal lines is called *somovuni*. The black dye (*somo*) is made of *sikethi* (p. 89).

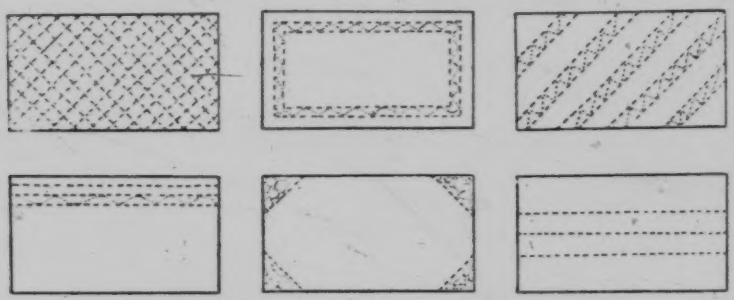

FIGURE 18.—Sketches of mats, showing design placement.

285 According to aged informants, a very soft mat, called *latha*, was formerly
[854] used as a sling to carry infants on the back or the hip. The *latha* was of fine weave and about 2 meters long and 45 cm. wide.

[292] Another fine mat, the *tawala*, was formerly used as a dancing kilt. One corner of the mat was bent down and the mat was tied around the waist with a piece of barkcloth or sennit. Old mats worn by mourners are also called *tawala*.

[622] A very fine, white mat, called *tawake*, was tied to the mast of a chief's canoe as a flag or emblem of rank.

[237] Natives say that mat fringe, although called *kula* (red parakeet), was formerly made of rooster feathers or of the inner bark of the *sitchi* in southern Lau. The feathers from the red parakeet were used to fringe mats in the Moala group but not in southern Lau, according to informants.

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COCONUT-LEAF MATS

Coconut-leaf mats, which have no trade value, are made throughout the Lau group. There are two types, the *tambakau* and the *mbekambeka*. 285

The *tambakau* mat is made by either a man or a woman out of a single young, tender coconut leaf. The leaf is dried in the sun until it turns yellow brown. Then the midrib of the leaf is trimmed and the close leaflets are plaited from the midrib outward. The ends are turned under and worked into the weave. *Tambakau* mats are used as mat cushions on the floor of the dwelling house to protect the floor mats. They are also used as door screens. [352]

Mbekambeka are rough mats made easily and quickly by either men or women, and used for door screens, fish ropes, and protective coverings for rolls of dried pandanus, pandanus mats, and barkcloth. The *mbekambeka* mat is made out of a single mature coconut leaf. The midrib of the leaf is trimmed and split lengthwise. The open leaflets of each half are plaited from the midrib out, and the halves are rejoined by braiding together the ends of the leaflets, starting at the upper end and working toward the lower end of the leaf.

BASKETS

The most common type of women's basket in Lau is the *kato tchina*, which is common in western Polynesia. The type is called *ola tu* in Samoa and has been described by Buck (2, p. 198; pl. 14, *B*). Other women's baskets are the fishing basket (*noke*) and the carrying basket (*ketekete*). [415]

Baskets of pandanus made by the method of right-angled plaiting have been introduced recently into Lau from Fiji proper. *Walaki* baskets of the coiled type are made in Lau and are imported from Rotuma. *Walaki* baskets of the twined type are not made in Lau but are imported from Fiji proper. [177] [439]

Temporary plates (*i tambe*) of the common western Polynesian type (called *mailo* in Samoa, Buck, 2, p. 183; pl. 12, *C*; fig. 91), made of open coconut leaflets, are used for feasts in Lau and discarded immediately afterwards.

Permanent trays made of closed coconut leaflets are called *lalakai*. They are used by persons of high rank only and are rarely seen in southern Lau.

COCONUT OIL

Coconut oil (*walivali*) is made only by women in Lau. Usually the women of a household or a subclan cooperate in the task. The Lauans like their coconut oil strongly and pungently scented, so gathering and combining fragrant flowers, fruit, bark, leaves, and roots is the first step in the process of oil making. The following plants are used: 303